

## **Rules of Engagement: A Hard Look at Reality**

**by J.J. Johnson - Editor & Chief of Sierra Times 10.08.01**

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This message is directed to any and all supporters of the Taliban, or bin Laden, who may be located in or near the United States.

This will, no doubt, also be read by many Americans as well. The subject of the message will be very controversial and, to some, very disturbing - especially in America. But as I fear Americans will only tolerate living in fear for a short time, it's time to lay the cards out on the table.

Both President Bush and England's Prime Minister Tony Blair stated on Sunday that this military action is not a war against Islam, and in fact, both are providing humanitarian aid as well. They have stated repeatedly that the two respective governments are not at war with the Islamic people.

In a televised statement, Osama bin Laden called on all Muslims to join in a holy war against America, and stated, "to all citizens of the United States, you will never know peace, you will never know security, until we feel secure in our own land".

First to the Islamic (Muslim) people here in the United States: We would like to hear public statements denouncing and disavowing these remarks. This would greatly help the situation here for everyone. Don't worry about the statements not getting on television, radio or into newspapers. Muslim leaders may send them here, and we will gladly publish them.

If there is silence throughout the Muslim communities of North America, some may well conclude that there are those who support such attacks here on American soil. We are receiving reports that punitive actions may occur, even against American citizens. Law enforcement agencies are currently on high alert to watch for such threats. So are the American people. The evidence all points to the fact that not all Arabs, much less all Islamics, are involved in these suicide attacks, but all who are involved in such attacks in the past and the future are Arabs or Islamics..

Arabs, or Islamics, who many believe are currently on U.S. soil now.

This is the quandary that we are in. As the dragnet has gone out for any suspicious Arabs or other Islamics, they have undoubtedly gone 'underground'. This means that they are currently using whatever support network is available to them. The question: Who and what is part of this support network?

A Little American History.

It is widely know that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) gets much of its financial support from Irish Americans here in the United States. IRA members have been known to find shelter in some sympathetic American homes in the past. Even though the policies and practices of the Ku Klux Klan was widely denounced by the Caucasian population here, they still found support and safe havens among certain Caucasian people. The same applies to

the past Black Panther organization. They were widely denounced by much of the black population in the United States, but when the dragnet began, many of them found safe havens in the care of other black supporters.

These are just three of many organizations that, in the past, have found themselves pursued by law enforcement here in the United States for their activities. But none of these organizations were known to have suicide missions intended to kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people - with calls from their 'leaders' to do more.

That seems to be the situation we have here. While many Americans are in fact, afraid of what may happen next, many other Americans are wondering, where are these enemies hiding. Where would their support base be in the United States? Who would give the shelter? Who would give them aid and comfort while they plan their next attacks?

After September 11, 2001, the American people took it upon themselves, without any sanction by the government, to arm themselves. According to Japanese military officials, the right to keep and bear arms is what prevented the Japanese from invading our mainland after the attack on Pearl Harbor. As the Russians learned from the Afghans, no one wants to deal with a nervous, angry, and armed populace.

After hearing conversations with many Americans, I know they are deeply concerned about a support network that would harbor people committed to causing such death and destruction; who follow the will of leaders who demand death and destruction as the only way. Many Americans are also concerned that law enforcement cannot do enough to protect its citizens, and certain pro-active steps may be taken by some Americans to prevent the possibility of further attacks.

It is known that Arab and Islamic citizens are currently having difficulty at airports, bus stations, train stations, etc. Airline pilots and others are arming themselves. We are a tolerant people. But if it becomes obvious that our liberty is at stake because of a few, Americans may take it upon themselves to do what they can to make this nation secure - before the next attack takes place.

This could put the safety of every Arab and Islamic person in this country in jeopardy.

**Let me make it clear that I do not advocate, support or condone such actions be taken. Nor will the U.S. government, or most Americans.** But if attacks continue, this frightening consensus may grow on Americans - as individuals. They may not seek only the guilty parties, but their entire support network. No quarter will likely be given. The possible actions outlined here are illegal in this country. But if attacks persist, it will be hard to find a jury to convict such an individual, and it might even become difficult to find a prosecutor to prosecute such cases, or even police to arrest such individuals.

This is the reality of it all. Americans will not tolerate living in fear, they will not tolerate the slaughter of their fellow civilians, and they will not tolerate a 'police state' as a false sense of security. They are heavily armed at this time. Perhaps someone should get this message to radical Middle-Eastern organizations. If they think they just attacked Americans, they should remember that the attack on the World Trade Center was an attack against people from at least 60 nations. It was truly an Act of War. Our military has the right to stop such actions aboard. Americans feel they have the right to stop further attacks in their own country as well - using pro-active measures if necessary.

And by the way: the use of weapons of mass destruction here, of any type, would probably cause the American public to demand retaliations that would cause un-precedented loss of life on middle-eastern homelands, and the lingering affects would last for generations. No one wants this to happen. But it could become the reality if pushed by those who wish to challenge our resolve.

I pray that it does not come to this. I pray that Muslims across America will denounce the attack on September, 11, 2001, and any further attacks that may be planned. I pray that no Arab or Islamic communities are giving 'aid and comfort to an enemy' in this time of war. I pray that those planning future attacks here understand the peril they will leave for their 'brothers' while they are 'in paradise'. This is not the real Islam. This is evil - something the citizens of the United States will not tolerate.

I am humbly asking the Arab and Islamic people in this country and around the world to work quickly to remove this threat to Americans before the Rules of Engagement change.

Sincerely,  
J.J. Johnson

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